

Williamstown North Primary School

Student Engagement & Wellbeing Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Williamstown North Primary School's office on: 03 9397 5722

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations for positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Williamstown North Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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POLICY

1. School profile

Williamstown North Primary School is located in Williamstown, a suburb, within the Hobsons Bay municipality. In 2025, as of October the school has a total enrolment of 624 students. There are 47

teaching staff (42.7 equivalent full-time) and 14 education support staff (11.2 equivalent full-time). The school prides itself on providing an inclusive learning community that promotes personal excellence, creativity and empowerment. The school values are, Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Doing Our Best and these underpin all academic and wellbeing programs.

The school is able to offer spaces such as our Butterfly Room (where Social Thinking classes can operate), library and dedicated learning spaces for our specialist subjects including; Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Japanese and STEM. The school is set amongst established grounds with contemporary facilities and well-resourced classrooms. Students consistently display high levels of achievement in their learning with the intention of doing their personal best. Student behaviour is generally exemplary, with students demonstrating care, empathy, and consideration for their peers. The school is supported by a wonderful parent community who are actively involved in many aspects of the school. A key focus for staff is to build upon the individual needs of students, nurture their individual talents, and provide rigorous and purposeful educational programs whilst tracking learning progress for all students. The school engages extensively with local kindergartens as well as the Hobsons Bay network of schools participating in centre visits, Communities of Practice in Mathematics and Inclusion and consistent positive transitions between kinder and year prep as well as year 6 to year 7.

2. School values, philosophy and vision

At Williamstown North Primary School, we are proud to be a welcoming learning community where every student is supported to grow academically, socially and emotionally. Our purpose is to create a dynamic and inclusive learning community that aims to promote personal excellence, critical thinking and empowerment.

Everything we do at WNPS is guided by our core school values:

- **Respect** – for ourselves, others and our environment
- **Resilience** – bouncing back and learning from challenges
- **Responsibility** – taking ownership of our actions and learning
- **Doing Your Best** – striving to achieve personal excellence

These values are woven into everyday school life—through classroom learning, student leadership opportunities, assemblies, and behaviour expectations.

You can read more about our values and school philosophy on our website:

<https://williamstounorthps.vic.edu.au/our-school/purpose-and-school-values>

3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Williamstown North Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour, and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We recognise the importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social,

emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

Universal:

At Williamstown North Primary School, we take a whole-school approach to student wellbeing and emotional development. Our goal is to support students not just academically, but socially and emotionally as well. We use a range of evidence-based programs and frameworks to help students develop the skills they need to thrive—such as managing their emotions, building respectful relationships, making positive behaviour choices, and learning from conflict. Below are some of the key programs we use at WNPS to support our students every day:

The Zones of Regulation:

At Williamstown North PS, we use The Zones of Regulation to help students recognise and understand their emotions. The program teaches students to identify which “zone” they’re in—such as calm, frustrated, sad, or overly excited—and provides them with strategies to regulate those feelings. By learning how to manage their emotions, students are better prepared for learning, building friendships, and making positive choices. We encourage families to use this language at home too, helping children develop strong emotional awareness and self-regulation skills.

Rights, Resilience and Respectful Relationships (RRRR):

The RRRR program is part of our school’s commitment to teaching social and emotional learning in every classroom. It helps students build respectful relationships, understand their rights, show empathy, and develop resilience when facing challenges. Through regular classroom lessons, students learn how to manage friendships, resolve conflict, understand diversity, and stand up against bullying. These skills are essential not only for the classroom, but for life.

Restorative Conversations:

When incidents happen between students, we use restorative conversations to help repair relationships and restore a sense of safety and respect. Rather than focusing solely on punishment, these conversations give students a chance to reflect on their actions, understand how others were affected, and make things right. This process encourages accountability, empathy, and long-term behaviour change, helping students learn from mistakes and move forward in a positive way.

School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS):

Our school follows the SWPBS framework, which helps create a consistent and positive approach to behaviour across the whole school. At Williamstown North PS, we teach and model our school values—Respect, Responsibility, Resilience and Doing Your Best—and acknowledge students who demonstrate these behaviours. By setting clear expectations and reinforcing positive choices, we create a safe, supportive learning environment where every student can thrive.

At Williamstown North Primary School, we foster a positive, inclusive and high-achieving environment through a range of whole-school practices and strategies, including:

- *high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers*
- *prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing*
- *creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive and that embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued*
- *welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning*

- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Williamstown North Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Leading Teachers, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, and peer support programs
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peers support programs
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

Targeted:

At Williamstown North Primary School, there are a number of targeted programs and supports in place to help support our students' well-being and engagement. These include:

Social Thinking

At Williamstown North Primary School, we use the *Social Thinking* program to help students build important social skills, such as understanding how their words and actions affect others, working as part of a team, and learning how to make and keep friends. These skills are taught explicitly and through guided group activities, helping students develop empathy and strong peer relationships.

Zones of Regulation and Toolkits

Our school uses the *Zones of Regulation* to teach students how to recognise their emotions and develop tools to manage them effectively. Students learn to identify which "zone" they are in (blue, green, yellow, red—and violet for confusion or feeling stuck), and use personalised strategies from their toolkits to self-regulate. This approach supports calm and focused learning, and helps students move through emotions in a healthy way.

Behaviour Support Plans

Some students benefit from having a *Behaviour Support Plan*—a personalised strategy developed by teachers, wellbeing staff and parents to help a child be successful at school. These plans focus on strengths and outline clear expectations, supports and goals, so students can learn to manage their behaviour and feel confident in their learning environment.

Structured Break Times

We offer *structured break times* for students who may find the yard overwhelming or need a bit more support in navigating social situations. These breaks offer supervised, purposeful activities that help students engage in positive play, build social skills, and feel more settled when returning to class.

Butterfly Room

The *Butterfly Room* is our calm, sensory-friendly space where students can take time to reset and regulate their emotions. It's also a place for developing social skills through guided activities with staff. Whether a student needs a quiet place to cool down or structured time to work on friendships and self-awareness, the Butterfly Room offers a safe, supportive environment to meet their needs.

At Williamstown North Primary School, we are committed to creating a school environment where every student feels seen, supported and valued. We understand that students come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and we have a number of systems and supports in place to ensure all learners are able to thrive. Our approach to student wellbeing and engagement is inclusive, responsive and guided by the Department of Education's policies. The following outlines the key ways we support the diverse needs of students across our school community.

- each year group has a Leading Teacher responsible for their year, who monitor the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all cultural and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school.
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQA+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQA+ Student Support](#),
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Learning Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year

- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)

Individual:

Williamstown North Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
 - school-based wellbeing supports
 - Student Support Services
 - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst
 - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plans in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
 - with a disability
 - in Out of Home Care
 - with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying students in need of support

Williamstown North Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Williamstown North Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- *personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled*

- *attendance records*
- *academic performance*
- *observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation*
- *attendance, COMPASS chronicles, detention and suspension data*
- *engagement with families*
- *self-referrals or referrals from peers*

5. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Statement of Values highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

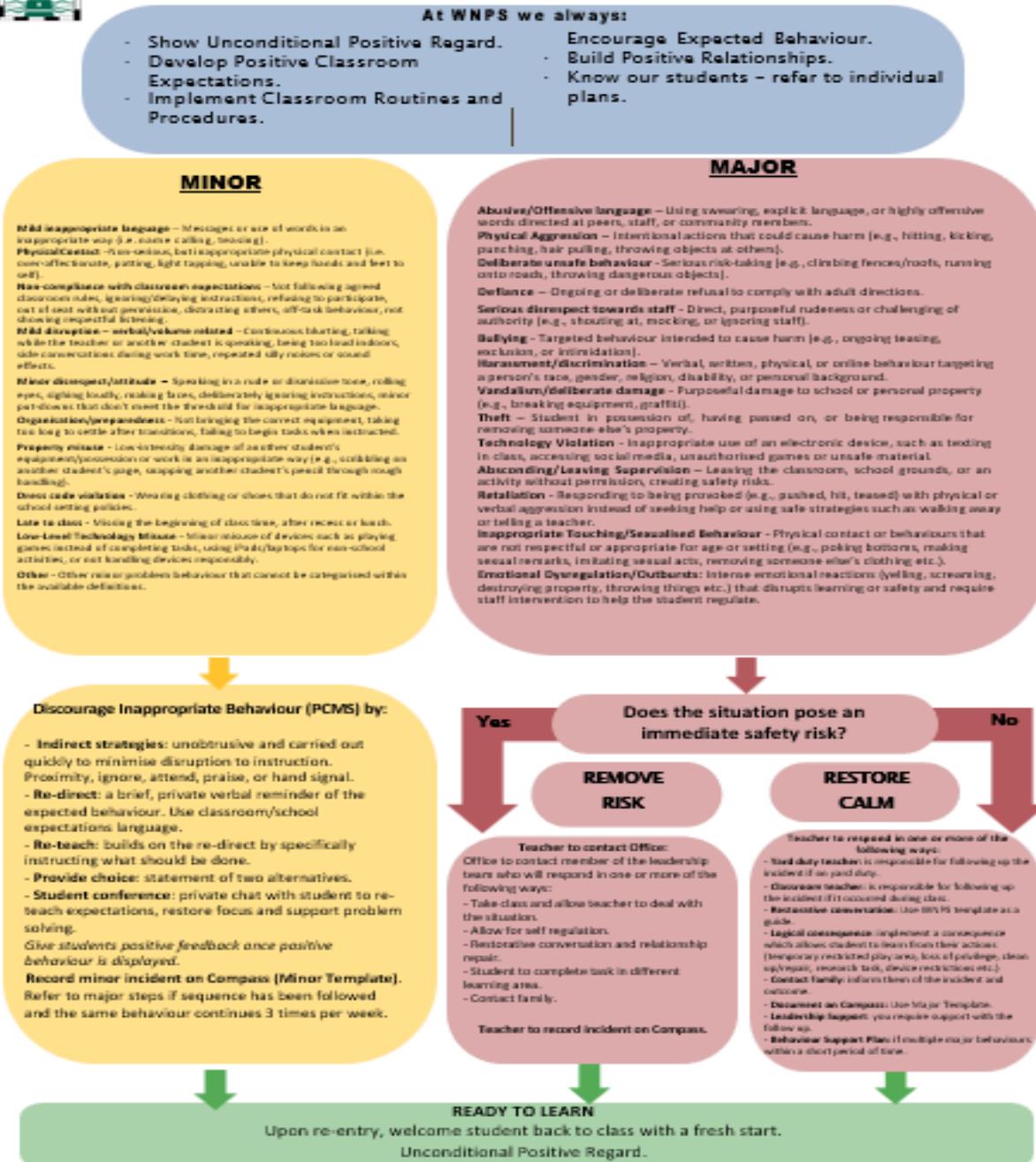
Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our Complaints Policy.

6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Please see our management of major and minor behaviours with the following flowchart:



Williamstown North PS Behaviour Flowchart



We also have a Restorative Approach to incidents where another student has been harmed or hurt, physically or emotionally. This approach aims to help students reflect on their actions, understand the impact on others, and take steps to repair the relationship. It encourages accountability, empathy, and positive behaviour moving forward. We also create actionable steps to help students repair the harm they have caused. Here is the template that teachers and students follow during a Restorative Conversation:

Restorative Conversations Template - Williamstown North Primary School

What Happened?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● "Can you tell me what happened?"● "Can you tell me which zone you were in when this happened?"
Who Was Impacted?
Help the student understand how their behaviour impacted others: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● "Do you think anyone else was impacted/hurt by what happened?"● "How do you think they felt when that happened?"
Moving Toward the Green Zone (Self-Regulation)
"What can you do to get back to the green zone when you're in the red or yellow zone?" Suggest/discuss calming strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Stop, Calm, Think, Do strategy.● Take deep breaths / Count to 10 / Ask for help● Walk away / Clench fists / Take a break● Zones Toolkit
How Can we make this better?
Focus on repairing the harm with simple, meaningful actions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">● "What can we do to help [name of impacted person] feel better?"● "What can you do next time to make a better choice?"
Agreement on Next Steps
Create a simple, actionable plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● "We agreed you will [say sorry, share, take a break next time, etc.]. And use the following strategies: '...'"

Conflict Resolution:

At Williamstown North Primary School, we are committed to teaching and supporting students in managing conflict in a safe, respectful and constructive manner. We recognise that students may sometimes find themselves in situations of disagreement or confrontation, and we have clear expectations in place to guide their response.

Students are expected to de-escalate conflict whenever possible by walking away, using taught conflict resolution strategies, or seeking support from a nearby teacher or staff member.

Retaliation—whether physical or verbal—is not acceptable and will be treated as a breach of our school's behaviour expectations, even if another student initiated the conflict.

We acknowledge there may be rare instances where a student feels physically threatened and has no safe option to walk away or access support. In such cases, a minimal and proportionate act of

self-defence may be recognised, but only where all other avenues to avoid harm have been clearly exhausted.

It is important for families to understand that if a student responds to aggression with further aggression—such as hitting back, name-calling, or threatening behaviour—their response will also be addressed as inappropriate behaviour. Our focus is on promoting calm, respectful, and safe ways to resolve issues, and we actively support students in learning these strategies through our wellbeing programs and restorative practices.

We encourage parents and carers to reinforce these expectations at home and work with us in supporting students to make positive, safe choices when faced with conflict.

At Williamstown North Primary School, we are committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment for all students. We set high standards for student behaviour and respond to incidents of harm or misconduct with a fair, consistent and supportive approach. The following outlines how we manage inappropriate behaviours, including bullying, discrimination and other serious breaches of our school's values.

Student Privacy and Behavioural Consequences:

At Williamstown North Primary School, we are committed to upholding every student's right to privacy and dignity. For this reason, we do not share information about the consequences or disciplinary actions applied to other students. We understand that parents may be curious or concerned following an incident, but please be aware that discussing the outcomes related to another child's behaviour would be a breach of privacy. Rest assured, all matters are followed up in line with our school's behaviour and wellbeing policies, and appropriate action is always taken. We appreciate your understanding and support in maintaining a respectful and confidential school environment.

Maintaining a Safe and Respectful School Environment:

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our Bullying Prevention Policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Williamstown North Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Responses to behaviour are always tailored to the individual situation and take into account the student's needs, context, and developmental stage. The examples below illustrate typical responses but are not exhaustive or prescriptive.

At Williamstown North Primary School, our approach to student behaviour is grounded in respect, safety, and inclusion. We aim to use restorative practices that focus on repairing harm, building relationships, and teaching students the skills they need to make positive choices.

- All students have the right to feel safe and included at school.
- Responses to behaviour will always be **reasonable, proportionate, and consistent** with the Department of Education's Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy. Our focus is on **restoration, reflection, and re-teaching**, supported by logical consequences when necessary.
- Students are supported to practise de-escalation, impulse control and emotional regulation tools and strategies when needed.
- Parents and carers will be informed when major behaviours occur, and incidents are recorded on Compass.

Minor Behaviours:

Minor behaviours are low-level behaviours that do not pose a safety risk but may affect learning, relationships, or the smooth running of the classroom. These behaviours are addressed by teachers through positive redirection, reminders, re-teaching, or restorative conversations, with the goal of helping students quickly return to learning.

Examples of minor behaviours include:

- Mild inappropriate language such as name calling or teasing.
- Low-level physical contact (e.g., patting, tapping, play tackling, not keeping hands and feet to self).
- Mild disruptions such as blurting out, talking over others, or making silly noises.
- Non-compliance with classroom expectations (e.g., ignoring instructions, being off-task, not following routines).
- Minor disrespectful behaviours such as eye-rolling, sighing, or dismissive tone.
- Lack of organisation or preparedness (e.g., missing equipment, not settling quickly after transitions).
- Misuse of property (e.g., scribbling on another student's work, rough handling of materials).
- Dress code or uniform breaches.
- Lateness to class after breaks.
- Low-level technology misuse (e.g., gaming or non-school use of devices).
- Poor sportsmanship (e.g., arguing over rules, refusing to share equipment).

These behaviours are managed within the classroom wherever possible, with a focus on teaching students appropriate alternatives and reinforcing the school's shared expectations.

Major behaviours:

Major behaviours are serious actions that place the safety, wellbeing, or inclusion of others at risk, or that significantly disrupt learning and school operations. These behaviours require a more structured response, often involving leadership, wellbeing staff, and parent communication.

Responses focus on restoration, reflection, and re-teaching, alongside logical consequences where necessary, to ensure that students take responsibility for their actions and learn safe and respectful alternatives.

Examples of major behaviours include:

- **Abusive or offensive language:** Swearing, highly offensive remarks, or targeted verbal abuse.
- **Serious verbal aggression or threats:** Intimidating, threatening, or deliberately harmful statements.
- **Physical aggression:** Hitting, kicking, punching, or other actions intended to cause harm.
- **Retaliation:** Responding to provocation with aggression rather than using safe strategies.
- **Unsafe behaviour:** Risk-taking that endangers self or others (e.g., climbing fences/roofs, throwing dangerous objects).
- **Bullying (repeated):** Ongoing targeted behaviours such as teasing, intimidation, or deliberate exclusion.
- **Harassment or discrimination:** Verbal, physical, or online behaviours targeting identity (e.g., race, gender, disability, religion).
- **Sexualised behaviour:** Inappropriate touching, sexual remarks, or imitating sexual acts.
- **Vandalism or deliberate property damage:** Graffiti, breaking equipment, or purposeful damage.
- **Theft:** Intentionally taking or hiding the property of others.
- **Serious misuse of technology:** Accessing inappropriate material, sending offensive content, or cyberbullying.
- **Leaving supervision / absconding:** Leaving the classroom, activity, or school grounds without permission.

When deemed appropriate, the school may implement consequences to maintain safety and allow time for reflection and planning. These measures provide students with the opportunity to regulate their behaviour and re-engage constructively before returning to the activity or area. Possible consequences may include:

- Missing part of a break
- Temporary loss of privilege
- Restricted play area for a short period
- Device restrictions
- Exclusion from special activities (excursion/incursion/Lunchtime League) if a risk assessment deems this necessary
- Research or reflection task (e.g., learning about respectful language, racism, sexism, discrimination)
- Cleaning or helping to repair damage to school property
- Referral to the wellbeing or leadership team.

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education.

The Principal of Williamstown North Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

7. Engaging with families

Williamstown North Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy.
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

8. Evaluation

Williamstown North Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incidents data
- school reports
- parent survey
- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data
- SOCS

Williamstown North Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included as annual reference in school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	21st October, 2025.
Consultation	School Council - October 21st
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October, 2027.